The TATLER.

By *Iſaac Bickerſtaff* Eſq;

From *Thurſday December* 1. to *Saturday December* 3. 1709.

From my own Apartment, December 3.

A Continuation of the Viſion.

THE Male World were diſmiſſed by the Goddeſs of Juſtice, and diſappeared, when on a ſudden the whole Plain was covered with Women. So charming a Multitude filled my Heart with unſpeakable Pleaſure; and as the Celeſtial Light of the Mirror ſhone upon their Faces, ſeveral of them ſeemed rather Perſons that deſcended in the Train of the Goddeſs, than ſuch who were brought before her to their Tryal. The Clack of Tongues, and Confuſion of Voices, in this new Aſſembly, was ſo very great, that the Goddeſs was forced to command Silence ſeveral Times, and with ſome Severity before ſhe could make them attentive to her Edicts. They were all ſenſible, that the moſt important Affair among Womankind was then to be ſettled, which every one knows to be the Point of Place. This had raiſed innumerable Diſputes among them, and put the whole Sex into a Tumult. Every one produced her Claim, and pleaded her Pretenſions. Birth, Beauty, Wit, or Wealth, were Words that rung in my Ears from all Parts of the Plain. Some boaſted of the Merit of their Husbands; others of their own Power in governing them. Some pleaded their unſpotted Virginity; others their numerous Iſſue. Some valued themſelves as they were the Mothers, and others as they were the Daughters, of conſiderable Perſons. There was not a ſingle Accompliſhment unmentioned, or unpractiſed. The whole Congregation was full of Singing, Dancing, Toſſing, Ogling, Squeaking, Smiling, Sighing, Fanning, Frowning, and all thoſe irreſiſtible Arts which Women put in Practice, to captivate the Hearts of reaſonable Creatures. The Goddeſs, to end this Diſpute, cauſed it to be proclaim'd, That every one ſhould take Place according as ſhe was more or leſs beautiful. This Declaration gave great Satisfaction to the whole Aſſembly, which immediately bridled up, and appeared in all its Beauties. Such as believed themſelves graceful in their Motion, found an Occaſion of falling back, advancing forward, or making a falſe Step, that they might ſhow their Perſons in the moſt becoming Air. Such as had fine Necks and Boſoms, were wonderfully curious to look over the Heads of the Multitude, and obſerve the moſt diſtant Parts of the Aſſembly. Several clapped their Hands on their Foreheads, as helping their Sight to look upon the Glories that ſurrounded the Goddeſs, but in Reality to ſhow fine Hands and Arms. The Ladies were yet better pleas'd, when they heard, that in the Deciſion of this great Controverſy, each of them ſhould be her own Judge, and take her Place according to her own Opinion of her ſelf, when ſhe conſulted her Looking-glaſs.

The Goddeſs then let down the Mirror of Truth in a Golden Chain, which appeared larger in Proportion as it deſcended and approached nearer to the Eyes of the Beholders. It was the particular Property of this Looking-glaſs to baniſh all falſe Appearances, and ſhow People what they are. The whole Woman was repreſented, without Regard to the uſual external Features, which were made entirely conformable to their real Characters. In ſhort, the moſt accompliſhed (taking in the whole Circle of Female Perfections) were the moſt beautiful; and the moſt defective, the moſt deformed. The Goddeſs ſo varied the Motion of the Glaſs, and placed it in ſo many different Lights, that each had an Opportunity of ſeeing her ſelf in it.

It is impoſſible to deſcribe the Rage, the Pleaſure, or Aſtoniſhment, that appeared in each Face upon its Repreſentation in the Mirror: Multitudes ſtarted at their own Form, and would have broke the Glaſs if they could have reached it. Many ſaw their Blooming Features wither as they looked upon them, and their Self-Admiration turned into a Loathing and Abhorrence. The Lady who was thought ſo agreeable in her Anger, and was ſo often celebrated for a Woman of Fire and Spirit, was frighted at her own Image, and fancied ſhe ſaw a Fury in the Glaſs. The intereſted Miſtreſs beheld a Harpy, and the ſubtle Jilt a Sphinx. I was very much troubled in my own Heart, to ſee ſuch a Deſtruction of fine Faces; but at the ſame Time had the Pleaſure of ſeeing ſeveral improved, which I had before looked upon as the greateſt Maſterpieces of Nature. I obſerved, that ſome few were ſo humble as to be ſurpriſed at their own Charms; and that many a one, who had lived in the Retirement and Severity of a Veſtal, ſhined forth in all the Graces and Attractions of a Syren. I was raviſhed at the Sight of a particular Image in the Mirror, which I think the moſt beautiful Object that my Eyes ever beheld. There was ſomething more than Human in her Countenance: Her Eyes were ſo full of Light, that they ſeemed to beautify every Thing they looked upon. Her Face was enlivened with ſuch a florid Bloom, as did not ſo properly ſeem the Mark of Health, as of Immortality. Her Shape, her Stature, and her Mien, were ſuch as diſtinguiſhed her even there where, the whole Fair Sex was aſſembled.

I was impatient to ſee the Lady repreſented by ſo divine an Image, whom I found to be the Perſon that ſtood at my Right Hand, and in the ſame Point of View with my ſelf. This was a little old Woman, who in her Prime had been about Five Foot high, tho' at preſent ſhrunk to about Three Quarters of that Meaſure: Her natural Aſpect was puckered up with Wrinkles, and her Head covered with grey Hairs. I had obſerved all along an innocent Chearfulneſs in her Face, which was now heightened into Rapture as ſhe beheld her ſelf in the Glaſs. It was an odd Circumſtance in my Dream, (but I cannot forbear relating it); I conceived ſo great an Inclination towards her, that I had Thoughts of diſcourſing her upon the Point of Marriage, when on a ſudden ſhe was carried from me; for the Word was now given, that all who were pleaſed with their own Images, ſhould ſeparate, and place themſelves at the Head of their Sex.

This

This Detachment was afterwards divided into three Bodies, conſiſting of Maids, Wives, and Widows; the Wives being placed in the Middle, with the Maids on the Right, and Widows on the Left; tho' it was with Difficulty that theſe two laſt Bodies were hindered from falling into the Centre. This Separation of thoſe who liked their real ſelves, not having leſſened the Number of the main Body ſo conſiderably as it might have been wiſhed, the Goddeſs, after having drawn up her Mirror, thought fit to make new Diſtinctions among thoſe who did not like the Figure which they ſaw in it. She made ſeveral wholeſom Edicts, which are ſlipt out of my Mind; but there were Two which dwelt upon me, as being very extraordinary in their Kind, and executed with great Severity. Their Deſign was, to make an Example of two Extremes in the Female World; of thoſe who are very ſevere on the Conduct of others, and of thoſe who are very regardleſs of their own. The firſt Sentence therefore the Goddeſs pronounced, was, That all Females addicted to Cenſoriouſneſs and Detraction, ſhould loſe the Uſe of Speech; a Puniſhment which would be the moſt grievous to the Offender, and (what ſhould be the End of all Puniſhments) effectual for rooting out the Crime. Upon this Edict, which was as ſoon executed as publiſhed, the Noiſe of the Aſſembly very conſiderably abated. It was a melancholy Spectacle, to ſee ſo many who had the Reputation of rigid Virtue ſtruck dumb. A Lady who ſtood by me, and ſaw my Concern, told me, She wonder'd how I could be concern'd for ſuch a Pack of ---- I found, by the ſhaking of her Head, ſhe was going to give me their Characters; but by her ſaying no more, I perceived ſhe had loſt the Command of her Tongue. This Calamity fell very heavy upon that Part of Women who are diſtinguiſhed by the Name of *Prudes*, a Courtly Word for Female Hypocrites, who have a ſhort Way to being virtuous, by ſhowing that others are vicious. The Second Sentence was then pronounced againſt the looſe Part of the Sex, That all ſhould immediately be pregnant, who in any Part of their Lives had ran the Hazard of it. This produced a very goodly Appearance, and revealed ſo many Miſconducts, that made thoſe who were lately ſtruck dumb, repine more than ever at their Want of Utterance; tho' at the ſame Time (as Afflictions ſeldom come ſingle) many of the Mutes were alſo ſeized with this new Calamity. The Ladies were now in ſuch a Condition, that they would have wanted Room, had not the Plain been large enough to let them divide their Ground, and extend their Lines on all Sides. It was a ſenſible Affliction to me to ſee ſuch a Multitude of Fair Ones either dumb or big-bellied: But I was ſomething more at Eaſe, when I found that they agreed upon ſeveral Regulations to cover ſuch Misfortunes. Among others, that it ſhould be an eſtabliſhed Maxim in all Nations, That a Woman's Firſt Child might come into the World within Six Months after her Acquaintance with her Huſband; and that Grief might retard the Birth of her laſt till Fourteen Months after his Deceaſe.

This Viſion laſted till my uſual Hour of Waking, which I did with ſome Surpriſe, to find my ſelf alone, after having been engaged almoſt a whole Night in ſo prodigious a Multitude. I could not but reflect with Wonder, at the Partiality and Extravagance of my Viſion; which, according to my Thoughts, has not done Juſtice to the Sex. If Virtue in Men is more Venerable, it is in Women more Lovely; which *Milton* has very finely expreſſed in his *Paradiſe Loſt*, where *Adam*, ſpeaking of *Eve*, after having aſſerted his own Preeminence, as being Firſt in Creation and internal Faculties, breaks out into the following Rapture:

—— Yet when I approach
Her Lovelineſs, ſo Abſolute ſhe ſeems,
And in her ſelf Compleat, ſo well to know
Her Own, that what ſhe wills, or do, or ſay,
Seems wiſeſt, virtuouſeſt, diſcreeteſt, beſt.
All higher Knowledge in her Preſence falls
Degraded. Wiſdom, in Diſcourſe with her,
Loſes, diſcountenanced, and like Folly ſhows.
Authority and Reaſon on her wait,
As one intended firſt, not after made
Occaſionally: And to conſummate all
Greatneſs of Mind and Nobleneſs, their Seat
Build in her loveliеſt, and create an Awe
About her, as a Guard Angelick placed.

Whereas I am informed, That there is a ſpurious and very incorrect Edition of theſe Papers printed in a ſmall Volume; Theſe are to give Notice, That there is in the Preſs, and will ſpeedily be publiſhed, a very neat Edition, fitted for the Pocket, on extraordinary good Paper, a new Brevier *Letter, like the* Elzevir *Editions, and adorned with ſeveral Cuts by the beſt Artiſts. To which is added, a Preface, Index, and many Notes, for the better Explanation of theſe Lucubrations. By the Author. Who has revis'd, amended, and made many Additions to the Whole.*

N. B. Notice ſhall be given in this Paper, when I conclude my Firſt Volume.

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